

U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Robert B. Zoellick
Press Statement
Residence of President Megawati Soekarnoputri
7:20 p.m., Sunday, April 7, 2002

"I was very honored to have an opportunity to meet with President Megawati again. As you know, I had the pleasure of seeing her in August and we also met again in Washington. I thanked her for the many kindnesses that she has shown.

"I also expressed our strong support for her and for her government with the efforts that they are making on many fronts in terms of economic reform, establishing democracy in Indonesia, and also obviously with the very difficult security questions.

"I reiterated that President Megawati's success is extremely important to the United States because she is a person that is bringing these different challenges together and Indonesia is an extremely important country for the United States. It is a country that has represented, since its origin, a tolerant Islam and it has shown the world that face of Islam. And also, as she moves forward with the democracy, she is bringing Indonesia into a new pattern of economic and political development.

"I also thanked her personally for the statements of support and policy that she has had and her government has had against terrorism following the events of September 11. I also asked her, on our behalf, to thank the people of Indonesia, because after the attacks on September 11 there were many expressions of warmth and support from Indonesians, average people, to my country.

"I also discussed with her the fact that the challenge of terrorism is sadly an ongoing one. It is one that is a cancer that affects all our countries and it affects the ability, whether in the United States, or Indonesia or other places, for people to live in peace and to create a new society, economically and politically.

"I also spoke with her about our strong interest in Indonesian economic reforms and progress. As you know, I was with Minister Rini on Batam and Bintan yesterday, where we were trying to show our interest in a practical way by including Indonesia and these islands in aspects of our free trade agreement with Singapore.

"Finally, I came here today - and benefited - to try to listen and to learn, from President Megawati and senior ministers on her team, because we know there are many complex issues that Indonesians face. Often people in Washington have to have a better sense of what it is like here in Indonesia, and so I benefited from their knowledge and experience, and I promised the president that I would relay this information to President Bush.

"So thank you very much."

###

